



EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES

## TIRANA • ALBANIA

### IMMIGRANT VISAS

#### Instructions for Immigrant Visa Applicants

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**NOTE:** All of the following documents will be mailed to the National Visa Center (NVC), as instructed by them. Only in a few exceptional cases, the U.S. Consular Section in Tirana might ask you to mail these documents directly to our office.

#### STEP 1 - For Beneficiary:

Complete Forms [DS-230](#) Part I & II, and obtain the required documents listed below.

#### STEP 2 - For Petitioner:

Complete the original Affidavit of Support, [Form I-864](#) (not photocopy, or by email), for each petition filed, accompanied by a photocopy of the sponsor's U.S. passport or legal permanent resident card, tax returns of the last year (Form 1040), most recent tax year W2s for all jobs held, and a recently issued job letter, or an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) transcript (even if the sponsor filed electronically). To request IRS-generated transcripts or copies of a tax return, please visit the [IRS website](#). This document must be less than 12 months old when presented on the interview date. If you are married, your spouse should also complete and submit an original [Form I-864A](#), accompanied by a photocopy of his or her U.S. passport or legal permanent resident card. You can find Form I-864 and I-864A at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services ([USCIS](#)) [website](#). For more information for preparing Affidavit of Support forms, please visit the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs web page "[Affidavit of Support Instructions](#)."

If your income does not meet the requirements of the [Poverty Guidelines](#), established yearly by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) or, if you are not qualified to sponsor your relative financially, you must find a joint sponsor who can present a signed Form I-864, accompanied by a photocopy of the sponsor's U.S. passport or legal permanent resident card, tax returns of the last year (Form 1040), or an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) transcript, most recent tax year W2s for all jobs held, and a recently issued job letter, **in addition to your I-864 Affidavit of Support**. If the joint sponsor is married, his spouse should also complete and submit an original Form I-864A, accompanied by a photocopy of his or her U.S. passport or legal permanent resident card. For more information on the joint sponsor's required documentation please visit the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs web page "[Checklists for Preparing Affidavit of Support Forms](#)."

If you did not file taxes in the last year, you **must also prepare a signed statement explaining why you were not required to file**.

You might submit evidence of assets if you want to use them to prove your ability to support the applicant financially.

## Required Documents For Each Immigrant Visa Applicant:

**1. PHOTOCOPY OF PASSPORT:** Photocopy of passport must be provided. The beneficiary's passport must be valid for travel to the United States and must have at least one year validity beyond the issuance date of the visa. You must present your passport at the interview date.

**2. FORMS:** [Form DS-230](#) Part I (Application for Immigrant Visas and Alien Registration), and Part II (Sworn Statement). Application for Immigrant Visa and Alien Registration must be fully completed. Please do not leave any questions blank on the application forms. Questions that do not apply to the applicant's particular situation should be answered "N/A" or "Not Applicable". This form can be downloaded through the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs web page "[Visa Application Forms](#)."

**3. BIRTH CERTIFICATES:** Original birth certificate for each applicant. It should read Certificate of Birth, not Personal Certificate (e.g.: the certificate translated in six languages reads "Certificate of Birth – Certifikatë Lindjeje). Birth certificates must be issued by the government of the country where the applicant was born. Albanian birth certificates for applicants **not** born in Albania will not be accepted.

**4. MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE:** Original marriage certificate for each applicant.

**5. DIVORCE DECREE OR DEATH CERTIFICATE:** If previously married, please include proof of termination of that marriage whether by death or divorce (e.g. death certificate of previous spouse, final decree of divorce, etc).

**6. COURT RECORDS:** Criminal record (in Albanian Dëshmi Penaliteti) issued by the Albanian Ministry of Justice for each applicant age 16 years or over in current and any former names, **including maiden names**.

**NOTE:** Persons convicted of a crime must obtain court records, even if the beneficiary has been pardoned or granted amnesty, or the criminal conviction is expunged. These documents must be translated and notarized.

**7. DISTRICT COURT AND ATTORNEY RECORDS:** These records are issued at the city where you have resided in the last six months, for all applicants age 16 or over in current and any former names, **including maiden names**.

**8. POLICE RECORDS FROM A FOREIGN COUNTRY:** A translated and notarized Police Record from a foreign country for applicants age 16 or over, if the applicant is currently living in that country for more than six months, or if the applicant has previously lived in that country for more than one year. For further information, please read the Police Certificates title of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs web page "[Documents the Applicant Must Submit to the NVC](#)."

**9. MILITARY RECORDS:** issued by the Army Recruiting Office (Zyra e Rekrutim-Mobilizimit), for all **male** applicants age 18 and over, regardless of having served the military service or not.

**10. OTHER COURT DOCUMENTS:** Court records regarding name changes, age amendments, adoption and similar subjects must also be submitted at the time of interview.

**11. TRANSLATION:** Certified English translations must accompany all documents not in English, or in the official language of the country (Albanian). Translations must be certified by a competent translator and sworn before a Notary Public. All certificates must be less than 12 months old when presented on the interview date.

**12. PHOTOS:** Regardless of age, all U.S. Immigrant Visa applicants must present one un-retouched color photographs, approximately 2 X 2 inches (5 X 5 cm) in size, taken on a white background. The photo should have a full frontal view of the face, with the head centered in the frame. The face should cover 50 percent of the photo area. For more details please visit the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs web page "[Photograph Requirements](#)." If the requirements are not met, the photo will not be accepted. The photo should be taken within the past six months.

**13. EVIDENCE OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT:** See **STEP 2** above for detailed information.

**14. FOR THE IR-5 VISA CATEGORY** (Immigrant visa for parents of U.S. citizens): Birth certificate and marriage certificate of petitioner.

## Processing of Immigrant Visas

Upon receipt, each application will be reviewed by NVC. If the documentation is complete, NVC will schedule an appointment and notify the petitioner and the beneficiary with an appointment letter. The appointment letter may be sent by e-mail, regular mail, or UPS.

## Before The Interview

**1. SECURITY:** You are advised to not have unnecessary items in your bag on the interview day, because you will undergo a security check.

**2. MEDICAL EXAMINATION:** Before their final immigrant visa interview, all applicants are required to undergo a medical examination performed only by the medical doctors authorized by this Embassy to administer the examination.

- a) For cases where the appointment date is set up by KCC: The beneficiary should go for the medical examination **exactly two weeks prior** to his/her interview date.
- b) For cases where the appointment date is set up by the Consular Section: The medical examination date is included in letter of the interview date.

In both cases, you will have to print the [medical examination](#) (PDF 283.95 KB), read it carefully, fill it in, and present it to one of the panel physicians. The beneficiary is also responsible for

the cost of the examination. A medical examination is also required for each accompanying child. You should have with you the appointment letter on the day of medical examination.

Do not send the results of your medical examination to this office before your interview. You will be required to submit your medical report to this office at the time of your interview. **Do not bring X-ray film to the Embassy.** Please read section VII regarding the X-rays.

You can download the Medical Examination form by visiting the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs web page "[Interview Preparation - Medical Examination](#)."

## Interview

**APPLICATION FEE:** Please visit the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs web page "[Fees for Visa Services](#)" for detailed information about immigrant visa fees. If the petitioner has already paid this fee with NVC for you, then you do not need to pay again. If not, you will be required to pay the application fee at the time of your interview. The payment may be made by cash only to the consular cashier, in U.S. Dollars or Albanian Lekë.

## After the Interview

After your personal interview with the Consular Officer, if your file is complete and you are found qualified, your visa will be issued and sent together with the visa packet by courier service to your address in Albania. Important: Please do not open the visa packet envelope.

Some visa applications require further administrative processing, which takes additional time after the visa applicant's interview by a Consular Officer. Applicants are advised of this requirement when they apply. Most administrative processing is resolved within 60 days of the visa interview. When administrative processing is required, the timing will vary based on individual circumstances of each case.

Before making inquiries about status of administrative processing, applicants or their representatives will need to wait at least 60 days from the date of interview or submission of supplemental documents, whichever is later.

## After you have Received the Passport and the Visa Packet

Do not open the sealed envelope, which contains your immigration packet. It should not be changed, and it should be surrendered along with the X-Rays to the U.S. immigration officer at a port of entry into the United States. Do not pack it; it must be hand-carried. You will fill out the Form "Alien Registration Card" (Form I-551), known as Green Card at the port of entry. This card will be mailed to the address in the United States, as written in your application forms. This is a very important document, which will serve as proof that you have permission for permanent residency and gives you the opportunity to stay and enter the USA without a visa.

The visa in the passport is usually valid for six months (in some cases for less than six months, thus check your visa's expiry date). Check your data on the visa for any possible misspelling. If you notice any misspelling on the visa, you should come back to the Consular Section, U.S. Embassy, Tirana, together with the sealed envelope and your passport to correct the data. You should enter the U.S. before your visa expires, otherwise you lose your status. Do not travel outside USA before you have received your Permanent Resident Card. Children who turn 21 years old after visa issuance, should travel to the United States before they turn 21 years old, otherwise they lose their status.

Your visa can not be extended beyond the six month period, and the fees paid for the visa are not refundable. If, for any reason you could not use your visa, please turn it back to the Consular Section, U.S. Embassy, Tirana. Another visa will be issued only if you prove that it was impossible for you to travel for reasons beyond of your control.

For a guide concerning new immigrants to the United States, please visit the USCIS web page "[Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants](#)" and [Welcome To USA website](#).

After being issued the Permanent Resident Card, you should stay abroad **for less than one year**, otherwise you will be considered to have lost your status of Legal Permanent Resident. For more information on the rights and responsibilities as Legal Permanent Residents, please visit the USCIS pamphlets "[I am a Permanent Resident. How Do I... Know What My Responsibilities Are?](#)" (PDF 1.19 KB), and "[How Do I Get a Reentry Permit](#)" (PDF 1.18 KB).

If you have questions regarding the Permanent Resident Card, or if you did not receive your card within a certain time, please contact the [USCIS office](#) in the state where you are living.

## Most Important

No assurance can be given in advance that a visa will be issued. A consular officer can make a decision only after the formal application and all documents are reviewed, and that officer has personally interviewed the applicants.

Beneficiaries should not make any travel arrangements for departure, dispose of personal property or make other life changes until the visa has been issued. An immigrant visa is valid for a maximum of six months from the date of issuance. Applicants must travel and apply for admission to the United States before their immigrant visas expire.

This office will make every effort to expedite the process. However should complications arise, applicants may be required to return to this office or furnish additional information.

Section 203(e) of the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act requires that an intending immigrant pursue his/her visa application within **one** year from the date he/she is informed that it is possible to do so. If you fail to do so within one year from the date of the attached letter, your application and any visa petition approved for you will be cancelled.